

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested. Claims 1-9 are pending, Claims 1, 4 and 7 having been amended by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-9 were rejected as being anticipated by Lim et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,574,599, hereinafter Lim).

The undersigned appreciatively acknowledges the effort made by the Examiner to identify the corresponding features in Lim with the independent claims in the present application. This assisted the undersigned in better understanding how the pending claims were compared against specific aspects of the asserted prior art.

Each of the independent claims, namely Claims 1, 4 and 7 have been amended to include a feature that more completely characterizes a difference between the present invention and that disclosed in Lim. In particular, Claim 1 has been amended to further describe that the program-activating means includes status detecting means for detecting a status of respective programs and judging whether to issue a local command that is specific to one of the respective programs based on the status.

No new matter is added because the present specification explains the significance of identifying a status of a particular program and then issuing a command (namely a “local command”) for one of the specific programs if that program is active. In particular, Applicants’ invention is able to operate with both “local commands” (specification page 29, line 6), as well as global commands (see, e.g., page 33, line 7). A global command is a command that “can be executed at any time without regard to the state of the focus” (where the term “focus”, refers to whether a particular program is operating or not, such as a still-picture photographing program 103, still-picture viewing program 104 or electronic-pet program 105). In this way, the voice commander 102 is able to issue a local command, if one

of the programs has been activated (see, e.g., the last paragraph of page 28). Moreover, the status of particular programs, as well as the data input by the predetermined speech of a user are used by an application communication unit 121 to issue a predetermined command to the activated program. Claim 1 has been amended to include this feature, as well as Claims 4 and 7.

The present invention is also capable of issuing global commands, which as discussed above, are able to be executed at any time without regard to the state of operation of any of the programs previously identified (for example).

Lim is directed to a voice-recognition-based method to establish outbound communication through a unified messaging system. In Lim, a verbal input is received from a user through a telephone, and that verbal input is then detected by voice recognition (column 4, lines 5-9). The first word spoken is an “action word” and is used to determine the type of communication service that the user wishes to select for creating an end-to-end connection. Additionally, Lim is able to detect other words, such as a called parties’ identity so as to know where to route a particular communication (column 4, lines 11-14). In this way, the user may indicate his choice of the outbound communication using voice commands so as to identify the particular communication server such as calling, faxing, e-mailing... (column 12, lines 37-40). In the description beginning at column 13 to column 24, Lim generally describes a variety of different ways in which the user may input voice commands so as to route particular information to one or a variety of different locations by way of different communication mechanisms.

In contrast to the invention of amended Claim 1, Lim does not disclose a program-activating means that also includes a status detecting means. Moreover, amended Claim 1 includes a status detecting means for detecting a status of respective programs and judging whether to issue a local command that is specific to one of the respective programs based on

the status. In contrast, Lim is directed to a system that only issues “general commands”. In Lim the burden is on the user to speak in a predetermined format so as to have the user’s verbal input received and processed for communication to an external source. The status detecting means of amended Claim 1 allows both the user and a system to be able to identify what the status is of a particular type of program that may be invoked (e.g., a still-picture photographing program, a still-picture viewing program or an electronic-pet program (as an example) and as would be displayed in display area 169 of Figure 12 for example). An advantage with this approach is that it allows more efficient activation and a customized vocabulary depending on the “focus” of the system. For example, a same verbal command may be reused depending on whether or not a particular program is in an active state or a passive state. Such is not the case with a global command where the verbal command has only one meaning.

In view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by amended Claim 1 is not anticipated by Lim. Furthermore, it is believed that Claim 1 has been amended to include a feature that, when taken as a whole, is not rendered obvious by Lim. For substantially the same reasons as discussed with regard to Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 4 and 7 also patentably define over Lim, as well as respective dependent Claims 2-3, 5-6, and 8-9.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-9, as amended, is patentably distinguishing over the prior art. The present application is therefore believed to

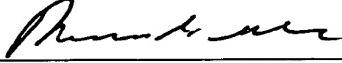
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be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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